

## LEA HILL VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING NOTES - APRIL 29, 2009



On April 29, 2009 the City of Auburn Mayor and City staff met with residents of Lea Hill Village at their Community Center, 12120 SE 319<sup>th</sup> Place, to discuss neighborhood concerns.

**Staff in Attendance:** MAYOR PETE LEWIS, COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER DUANNA RICHARDS, COMMUNITY SERVICES PROJECT ASSISTANT KIRSTEN REYNOLDS, HUMAN SERVICES MANAGER MICHAEL HURSH, ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF LARRY MILLER, COMMUNITY RESPONSE TEAM OFFICER BRIAN O'NEILL, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR DENNIS DOWDY, PLANNING & BUILDING DIRECTOR CINDY BAKER, ASSOCIATE CITY ATTORNEY ALLISON STANHOPE AND CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER DON STEPHENS

**Community Members in Attendance:** RENEE ADAMS, TONY STEPHENS, BRENDA WILLIAMS, GEORGE FRASIER, BARRIE STALEMORE, TRINA WISDOM, BRAD SINGER, DAVID AND MELISSA WILLIAMS, APRIL BOY DIAM CLAMOR, SHANNON BATES, REBECCA AND JODY MAXSON, KEN ABELES AND CHAR HUET

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Community Services Manager Duanna Richards welcomed everyone, thanked them for attending and asked City staff to introduce themselves. Mayor Lewis then indicated the primary purpose of the meeting was for the City to listen to the residents' concerns, consider solutions, respond to questions they could answer immediately and identify items for follow up. The City takes notes of the meeting, which are then sent out to the attendees.

Mayor Lewis facilitated the meeting and discussed the following topics:

- ***Mayor's Update*** -- residents were encouraged to sign up for the Mayor's Update, an e-newsletter Mayor Lewis sends out every Friday about what's taken place in the City during the week, upcoming events, etc. He also uses the listserv to send out alerts about road closures, emergencies, etc. as a way to keep the community informed. Since this is a listserv, if you decide you don't want to continue receiving it you can unsubscribe at any time.

### **Clean Sweep Questions/Comments**

- Clean Sweep is a time for all of us to get the chance to work together on a project to benefit the entire community. The 2009 Clean Sweep kick off started at 7:30 a.m. with a pancake breakfast and registration at City Hall. Participants took part in a ceremonial sweep down the sidewalks along Main Street, then assisted with specific projects all around the City.

Volunteers had the opportunity to work on major clean-up and beautification efforts in different areas, including painting over walls that had been defaced by graffiti, cleaning up highway on and off ramps and beautification projects along the Interurban Trail and at Veterans Memorial Park.

The City and the Lea Hill Village HOA Board invited residents to participate in a community-wide volunteer project selected for the Lea Hill Village neighborhood consisting of removing any graffiti from common areas in the neighborhood. This clean up project was made possible through the City's Neighborhood Grant Program, which helped cover the cost of paint and painting materials. The project will take on-going maintenance from the HOA and the residents. In the future the City will partner again to help residents plant new shrubs along the fence on 319<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **Public Safety Related Questions/Comments**

- ***Will the City of Auburn ever consider changing the regulations on fireworks?***

"If it goes up or blows up, it is illegal in Auburn!" The City allows the discharge of legal fireworks on July 4<sup>th</sup> only, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. Discharge is also allowed from 6 p.m. on December 31, to 1 a.m. on January 1. You must be at least 16 years old to purchase legal fireworks. The City always has increased enforcement on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July; Auburn Police will cite those using fireworks unlawfully with a possible fine of up to \$1,000 and 90 days in jail. Those discharging fireworks recklessly can face larger penalties. Anyone caught in possession of a device containing more than 2 grains of pyrotechnic charge (such as an M80) may be charged with a felony. Citizens can assist the City with this stepped up emphasis by calling 9-1-1 when fireworks are illegally discharged in their neighborhood.

- ***What should residents do about youth hanging out in common areas at night?***

The City of Auburn does have a curfew law that starts at midnight; residents were encouraged to call 9-1-1 if they see youth roaming the neighborhood late at night. Residents should have a realistic expectation about response times; calls are prioritized by life threatening situations first. Officers will respond to the suspicious youth call and investigate why they are out at night. Having an organized Block Watch group in the neighborhood is helpful and can increase neighborhood safety.

- ***How can we keep our neighborhood safe?***

Block Watch is built on the concept of neighbors watching out for each other, because they know better than anyone else who belongs in a neighborhood and who doesn't. If you think "maybe I should call 9-1-1 about this," you should. Residents were encouraged to set up a Block Watch through the Auburn Police Department. Once a group of neighbors are interested Officer Gould will come out and have a formal training regarding what to watch for, how to react and how to get more neighborhood participation. It is recommended that Block Watch groups get together at least once a quarter. A gathering could include hosting a National Night Out (NNO) party which takes place annually on the first Tuesday in August (8/4/2009). NNO provides an opportunity to increase awareness and safety in the neighborhood; the Mayor and Councilmembers take part in NNO every year. If residents are interested in holding a National Night Out event they should register with the Community Services Division by calling 253-876-1964.

- ***Are there opportunities to volunteer with the Auburn Police Department?***

Yes Auburn PD has a Citizen's Academy; it is an 11-week program. Classes are free! Participants meet once each week from 6:30 - 9:30 pm to learn about and interact with Police Department employees, from the Chief to the Volunteer Program Coordinator. Topics of discussion include K-9, Narcotics, Investigations, Firearms/Officer Survival, Records Management, Traffic Enforcement and Patrol, to name just a few. If you are interested in attending the Auburn Police Department Citizen's Academy you may stop by the Police Department to pick up an application or call (253) 288-3147.

## **Code Enforcement Related Questions/Comments**

- ***What should residents do if they have graffiti?***

Property owners and neighborhoods repetitively struggle with this issue. City Code requires property owners to remove graffiti within 15 days; a new Graffiti Removal Assistance Program was created in partnership with Parker Paint to help property owners take action. If neighborhoods are having graffiti problems they should call the City's Code Enforcement Division to report the problem 253-931-3090 or call the new Graffiti Hotline 253-931-3048,

Ext. 7; the officer will open a case and call your information into Parker Paint. Residents can go to Parker Paint in Auburn and pick up supplies to cover the graffiti.

Police suggested removing graffiti as quickly as possible; gangs have been known to use graffiti to mark territory for recruitment and claiming turf. The quicker residents can react by removing graffiti the better the chance to decrease the presence of a gang and/or troubled youth behavior.

City Council enacted a spray paint law that doesn't allow anyone under 18 years old to purchase spray paint. Individuals caught near a graffiti site with graffiti tools may also be subject to arrest under a new Council ordinance. A new program the City is exploring is getting juveniles previously caught doing graffiti to participate in doing community service specifically focused on graffiti clean up.

- ***Can the City designate an area for kids to do graffiti?***

This has been done in other communities and it was not successful; graffiti was still happening all around, not just in that location. This type of program has proven not to be effective for eliminating over all graffiti.

- ***How can we get rid of junk vehicles in the neighborhood?***

The City is currently working on this issue and will continue to work on it diligently until it is under control. Any abandoned vehicles on a city street should be reported using the 9-1-1 system for Auburn's Police Parking Enforcement to handle. If vehicles are parked on private property neighbors need to work with the HOA on how to deal with this problem.

### **Streets and Traffic Related Questions/Comments**

- The City and the Homeowners Association (HOA) Board have been working together to evaluate specific projects and efforts that would help clean up the neighborhood. One project that was identified to help eliminate criminal activity was to increase the amount of light on the streets. The City evaluated the structures and determined it is sufficient; however, the brightness could be increased. The HOA Board would need to contract with the private company who currently owns the lighting system to increase the brightness.
- ***Who is responsible for unclogging the storm drains?***  
It is the community's responsibility to ensure storm drains are kept clear of debris. If the drain is clear of surface debris then the HOA should call the Storm Drainage Division at the City, staff will check out the problem area and determine what can be done.

### **Other Topics Related to Lea Hill Village Questions/Comments**

- ***How do residents get access to converter boxes for their television?***  
Converter boxes are available for people needing to switch over to digital television from Comcast, located at 4507 45<sup>th</sup> and Auburn Way.
- ***What programs are offered for youth to keep them out of trouble?***  
The City's Parks, Arts & Recreation department has a variety of after-school programs being offered. The City will send a representative from Parks to one of the next Home Owners Association meetings to review programs with residents.

- ***Can the City maintain the common grounds and green belts in the neighborhood?***  
No, these areas are owned by the Home Owners Association; public funds cannot be used to benefit private property. There is a problem with garbage accumulating on dead-end streets. The landscaping company currently under contract charges extra for picking up garbage. It was suggested that residents should help keep the neighborhood clean by picking up trash.
- ***How can large trash items be disposed?***  
An event is organized once a year to pick up large items not normally picked up with regular garbage service. This annual event is called Spring Clean-Up (it is the second week in May); for Lea Hill residents Allied Waste has agreed to collect large bulky items at no charge for single family residential homes.

There are several other events throughout the year when a “King County Special Recycling Event” is held at Auburn Riverside High School. These events allow for some collection of different items. All of these events are advertised on the City’s website at [www.auburnwa.gov](http://www.auburnwa.gov). The Spring Clean-up has a brochure that is mailed out a few weeks before.

- ***Is there anything that can be done about littering in the neighborhood?***  
An increase in lighting around the neighborhood should help to prevent people from tossing garbage on the streets. There are work crews that perform this type of clean up for areas around the city; these people are doing community service clean up instead of jail time. Because the streets throughout the neighborhood are privately owned the City of Auburn cannot send a street sweeper through. There was a resident that asked if the HOA could provide more garbage cans around the area and make sure they are emptied before getting full. Residents were encouraged to attend the HOA meetings to discuss this topic further.

### **Summary of Solutions Discussed/Action Items**

1. The City will send a representative from Parks to the next Home Owners Association meetings to review programs with residents.
2. The City will help coordinate and participate in the Clean Sweep effort for the neighborhood.
3. The City will help coordinate and participate in planting the new shrubs along 319<sup>th</sup> Street in the fall season of 2009.

### **Community Services Team Contact Information:**

- Duanna Richards, Community Services Manager, 253-931-3099, or [drichards@auburnwa.gov](mailto:drichards@auburnwa.gov)
- Kirsten Reynolds, Community Services Project Assistant, 253-876-1964, or [kreynolds@auburnwa.gov](mailto:kreynolds@auburnwa.gov)